2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

LANGUAGE

197
174 According to Professor A. N. Samoilovich, the well-known Russian Turcologist,[1] Yakut is an independent subgroup of the northeastern division of the Turkic stock. As compared with other Turkic languages Yakut reveals considerable deviation from the general type of Turkic dialects. Consequently, it may be surmised that the Yakut Turks separated from the other Turkic peoples in very remote times, after which even their language developed quite independently and uninfluenced by other Turkic languages. This resulted in a difference between Yakut and the other Turkic languages so great that the prominent Turcologist, the late academician, W. W. Radloff, contended that the Yakut were not of Turkic origin, but may have become Turkicized within relatively recent times.[2] The characteristic peculiarities of the Yakut language he states, do not bear witness to their remote separation from other Turks; on the contrary, they show rather that the Yakut are only a Turkicized tribe of non-Turkic origin.[3] But Radloff's opinion can hardly be accepted, because the characteristic peculiarities of Yakut reveal many archaic traits. For example, the partial case, or genetive distributive, is formed by suffixes *ta*, *da*, *la*, *na*, and others; for instance, *uta* (from *u*, water) *asal*, bring water, meaning, some water. It corresponds to the Orkhon, *subda*, of the water. The Yakut ending, *tar*, for the conditional mood, corresponds to the suffix *sar* of the Uigur and Orkhon languages. These two suffixes are sufficient to show that the Yakut language has preserved grammatical forms which were observed in other Turkic languages from the seventh to the ninth centuries of our era.

I wish to sketch the Yakut grammar briefly, following mainly the new grammar of S. V. Yastremsky, who kindly sent me a copy of his manuscript, which has been presented to the Russian Academy of Sciences in Leningrad and which will be published in the near future by the Academy.

The Harmony of Vowels

[197]
● 194 The harmony of vowels in Yakut resembles the harmony of vowels in Kara-Kirghis and the Altaian Turkic dialects. It consists in the assimilation of all the vowels of a word to the vowel of the first syllable. Two rules are observed: first, all Yakut words consist of syllables having exclusively laryngeal or palatal vowels; second, a syllable containing a

[1] Samoilovich, A. N., *Some Additions to the Classification of Turkic Languages*. Petrograd, 1922 (In Russian). 8, 13.
[2] Radloff, *ibid.*, 51.
[3] Radloff, *ibid.*, 52.

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

long vowel must be followed by another voweled syllable; or conversely, a a short voweled syllable is followed by another of short vowels. Or, a word contains either syllables of long or short vowels, never the two in combination. The following table shows the series of vowels in the first syllable and the vowels corresponding to them in the syllable following:—

Harmony of Vowels

First syllable	Second syllable
a	a and y
e	e and i
o	o and u
ö	ö and ü
y	y and a
u	u and a
i	i and e
ü	ü and e

For instance, the vowel a in *bat* (suffix nominative verbal present negative) is assimilated to the vowel of the root; *ur-bat* from *ur* (to put); *kör-böt* from *kör* (to look); *ongor-bot* from *ongor* (to make). When two or three vowels adjoin, the law of harmony is followed only with reference to the first vowels of the component. Thus, we may have the following table:—

Harmony of Vowels

First syllable	Second syllable
a, y, ya, ai, yi, yai	a, y, ya, ai, yi, yai
o, oi	o, u, uo, oi, ui, uoi
u, uo, ui, uoi	a, u, uo, ai, ui, uoi
ö, öi	ö, ü, üö, öi, üi, üöi
ü, üö, üi, üöi	e, ü, ei, üi, üö, üöi

For instance, the plural ending of nouns is *lar*, as *aha-lar*, fathers; but the *a* in *lar* may be assimilated; *oho-lor*, children; *börö-lör*, wolves. There is another example: the suffix *lāx*, having; *aha-lāx*, having a father; *oho-lāx*, having a child; *börö-lāx*, having a wolf; *bī-lex*, having an elder brother; *tü-lēx*, having hair, down or wool.

There are no prefixes in the Yakut language.

Consonants

There are twenty-one consonants in Yakut, as follows:—

b, g, ƍ, h, d, ŋ, i, j, j, k, l, l', m, n, ń, p, r, s, t, x, č.

b and p as in English

g as in English

ƍ as a g with a spirant added

h as in English

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

● 194

d and t as in English

ŋ is a combination of two English sounds d and j, or j in journey

j as the English y in year

j̨ is a strongly nasalized j; the vowels accompanying j are also nasalized, for instance, *ijá*, mother

k as in English

l as in English

l', soft l, as in German

m and n, as in English

ñ a nasal g sound, pronounced like ng in among

r and t as in English

s as in English. Between two vowels it is pronounced like the German h in Hans. For instance, *as*, food, and *aaš* (*aha*), to eat.

x as German ch in Bach

č as English ch

The consonants, g, ƴ, p, r, ñ, j, j̨, h do not occur at the beginning of a word. The consonants g, n, and p when used instead of k, do not occur at the beginning of a word.

Two or three consonants do not occur at the beginning of a word. All consonants may be used in the middle of a word with the exception of r between two vowels. The use of s has been previously noted.

The consonants g, ƴ, d, č, ŋ, j̨, h do not occur at the end of a word.

Two consonants do not occur at the end of a word, with the exception of t after r and l and k after ƴ; for instance, *tüört*, four; *ilt*, carry.

Accent

Accent is constant in Yakut, i.e., it does not pass over from one syllable to another and is almost exclusively on the last syllable, like the accent in other Turkic languages and in French. Only a few words are accented on the first syllable, for instance, *subu*, this one. One must distinguish the accent of long vowels in the middle of words, in which the real accent falls on the last syllable.

Parts of Speech

193 Morphologically the parts of speech in Yakut may be divided into two fundamental groups: the verb and the noun. The most constant and conspicuous morphological distinction between these two groups is seen in the use of the negative particles, *ba*, *pa*, *ma*, and their equivalents. Verbal forms may have these negative suffixes, but these are not added to nouns; for instance, if we take the verbal stems, *bys* and *kel* (to cut and to come), their negative forms will be *byspat* and *kelebit; bysabyn*, I cut; *kelebin*, I come; *bysappyn*, I do not cut; *kelbeppin*, I do not come. The nouns, *bysax*, knife, and *kelī* (*kālī*), a visit, do not have negative

7: Shklovsky -- 33 T-3 (1891-92)1916 Yakut
116, 194, 492, 634

" It was the time of the summer general assembly (1) in Sredne Kolymsk, and Yakuts

1. There are two general assemblies, one in summer and one in winter.

came from the remotest parts of the district, from Verkhne Kolymsk, Alazei, etc, The 'street,' if it can so be described, was crowded and noisy. Numbers of Yakuts were constantly arriving on horseback at the house of the clerk where the assembly was held. Petty chiefs of small clans scornfully regarded the 'unofficial' people, constantly arranging their bead belts, from which hung old cutlasses, the gift of Catherine II to their ancestors. Near the house there were many horses tied up to poles. The extraordinarily high saddles, with large cushions adorned with copper and silver ornaments, would doubtless greatly astonish the ordinary cavalry man accustomed to Cossack and English saddles. From our windows could be heard the incessant hum of the guttural Yakutian language, which Gilder considered as sonorous and soft as a mixture of Italian and Irish. "

37: Dobell--344 [2] G-2 (1812-13) 1830 Yakut
116, 194

"The Yakut names of the principal ones [RCH: i.e., lakes] are Kharradah, Kharbatchi, Khallingattah, Maionnah and Moondrah. A vast number of the Yakut names end in loch and lach, and they pronounce them with a rough guttural sound, as the same terminations in Irish and Scotch are commonly spoken by the vulgar of those countries. Though I could not discover any actual rememblance [sic] in other words, I found the strongest, in sound, to the common Irish language, as spoken in the southern parts of Ireland."

44: Gilder -- 311-312 J-2 (1882) 1883 Yakut
116, 194

"There was one thing that I remarked at this time--namely, the delicious melody of the Yakout tongue as [312] spoken in the conversation with my drivers and Cossack. I had never before noticed this peculiarity, though subsequently it was a matter of constant remark. It seemed to me like a blending of the Irish and Italian dialects, with the crisp, rolling gutturals of the one, modified by the soft musical tones of the other."